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THE ULTIMATES 2

ISSUE

13



MARVEL

INDEPENDENCE DAY

When faced with Nazi Germany's military advances, the U.S. government decided that the best weapon against them was a person, not a bomb. With this in mind, Steve Rogers volunteered for a covert military experiment that turned him into Captain America. After a few years of exemplary service, Captain America fell in battle—his body wasn't recovered. Years passed and Captain America was found frozen in suspended animation. When he awoke, he was convinced to join Iron Man, The Wasp, Giant Man, Black Widow, Hawkeye, Hulk, Quicksilver, Scarlet Witch and Thor in the superhuman defense initiative run by Nick Fury, called The Ultimates.

PREVIOUSLY IN THE ULTIMATES:

After saving the world from an alien invasion, the Ultimates were hailed as the world's greatest celebrities. Unfortunately, times change. One by one, the team was taken down with the help of a traitor operating from within the group—Black Widow, who murdered Hawkeye's family and nearly killed Iron Man, before he found her out and subdued her.

By then it was too late: America had been invaded by an international team of superhumans calling themselves "The Liberators." The Ultimates retaliated, annihilating the attacking force—all except for the man claiming to be Loki, the brother of Thor. However, Thor—falsely branded as the team's traitor and also clearly delusional, believing himself to be a Norse god—remained incarcerated.

...until the Scarlet Witch's reality-bending powers called Thor onto the battle-scarred streets of Washington, D.C.

But what is Thor? God or madman?

INDEPENDENCE DAY



THE ULTIMATES

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NORWAY:

GET AWAY
FROM ME! GET
AWAY! GET
AWAY!

What's *going*
on here? What
are you people
doing to my
brother?

Making sure he doesn't *hurt* himself, Mister
Golmen. He's had another psychotic episode
about *thunder gods* and *super heroes*.
He's calling himself *the mighty*
Thor again.

Oh, Thorliel. Have
you stopped taking
your meds? You *know*
this always happens
when you don't do
what the doctors
say.



Your powers are weakening, Trickster! you have no hold over me now!







He *did* it.
He just killed
Loki.



Not quite, Captain. The
universe is putty in my
hands to be shaped and
fashioned any way I
please.

I can change the
color of the sun
and the sky. Do you
honestly believe he
could kill me with a
hammer?



THOR!



Bring on Surtur! Bring on Ymir!
Bring on the trolls, the dragons
and the giants! You've no idea
how liberating this feels!

Now you're
really going to
see what a god
can do.



Boys, I
think we might need
reinforcements,
here...









Why do I
smell *fear*,
Trickster?



Are those
wretched powers
weakening?



Was that
Thor? I haven't
got my glasses on.



No, weakness was
hiding in the *shadows*,
Thor. Weakness was
merely *orchestrating*
war...



I spent three
hundred years in
the Room Without
Doors, plotting and
planning our next
encounter.

But I should
have been *brave*. I
shouldn't have feared *old*
father Odin up there.



I should
have done
this *years*
ago.



How does it *feel*, brother?
How does it feel to die *alone*
in the *dirt*?

Idiot.

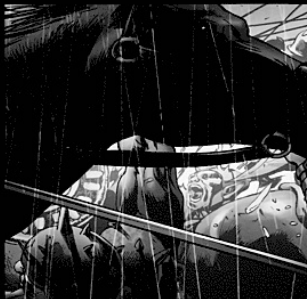


Did you
honestly
think...

....I would
come here
alone?















How *dare* you defile my father's name! How *dare* you thwart his plans for the world!



You are *filth*! You are *excrement*! I refuse to fall before the *shame* of Asgard!



I was *jealous*, Thor. Jealous he sent *you* to save the world. I only wanted you to fail so that he might smile on *me* for once.



Did you see my little clues? Did you see how *clever* I was? Norway's not even *in* the European Union...



And what about those *security tapes*, eh? All I did was wiggle my nose and they saw *Captain America* killing Hawkeye's Family.



Can't you see the *funny* side of all this?



Game's over, Loki. *Father* wants a word.





VICTORY!



NEW YORK CITY



That was *amazing*. Did you see the Thing smacking that guy with a truck? It was like something out of a cartoon, man. Colossus said he was even cracking jokes....

Are you okay, Sue? You seem a little *shaky*.

I'm *fine*. It's just adrenaline from all the fighting. It'll stop in a minute.

Well, that's New York, Washington and all the army bases back in our hands, Mister Stark. What do we do now?

Are there any more orders from S.H.I.E.L.D. command or should we fan out and help the emergency teams?



Oh, you're such an *earnest* young man, Reed. Keep this up and you'll be gray by *thirty*. You've just repelled a terrorist invasion, for heaven's sake...



Orders from above are to *break open the Bollinger*.



Oh my God. It was real. Everything you said was real. Look at us standing here with a big gang of Vikings. This is insane.





...and so as America's cleanup begins, Russia and China have been quick to distance themselves from the international terrorists claiming links to both governments.

Russian premier Vladimir Putin described the actions of the Liberators as 'horrific' and, together with the Chinese authorities, has offered both aid and a full investigation.



Millions of dollars have already been raised for families left homeless by the attack and the Red Cross has praised an unprecedented effort by volunteers around the globe.

Still uncertain is America's response-- Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has urged restraint from the White House, as have leaders in the European Union.



Naturally, the President and I are hopeful for a diplomatic solution, but we cannot rule out deployment of our own superhumans, at this stage in time.

This is, after all, what the ultimates were put together for...







Skinny kid becomes a super-soldier to go off and fight the invading army. I guess that story pushes all the right **buttons** for you, huh?



They're telling me you and your boys wanna **quit** after all this. Would that be **correct**?

I'm afraid so.



Country still needs **looking after**, soldier.

No, the **world** needs looking after. That's why we need to be **independent**, Nick. Sending us abroad again to stir up hate accomplishes **nothing**.



We can't fight your wars if it opens people up to **this**.



Change is on the way. Can't you smell it? Everything I came here to do is finally falling into place.

Yeah, well. The only thing that scares me about cutting loose from Uncle Sam is the money, Thor.



I don't mean *salaries* because we can all get other jobs. I mean the meeting rooms and private jets and all the equipment we're going to need to keep this thing going.



We're talking billions and billions of dollars here, right? Where are we going to find that insane level of *cash*?



Anyone fancy a little rumpy-pumpy back at my place tonight?



My father moves in mysterious ways, Janet.





You filthy American trash! I'll rip your eyes out for this!

What did you do to yourself, huh? Slash your wrists to bleed out Tony's nanites? You're one smart cookie, girl. So damn resourceful...



Got a message for the wife and kids, Hawkeye? Anything you'd like me to pass along?





TONY STARK'S TOWNHOUSE:



So how was the *memorial service*, Mister Stark?

Too sad to even *talk* about, Pepper. Let's change the subject to this wonderful shade of *vermillion* you've picked for the walls. I take it our new HQ meets all Feng shui requirements?

Absolutely, sir. But we're having problems with the aircraft hangar in what used to be the penthouse. The builders said they'll need two more weeks.



No problem. Just contact S.H.I.E.L.D., and let them know they'll need to hang onto that *jet* for another fourteen days. Ask for Nicky's office and we're sure to get a little *storage discount*.

Aren't relations with the general a little, uh, strained right now?

Why? Because we cut ourselves *loose*? Quite the opposite, actually. Relations have never been *better*.



All team costs have now transferred to me, leaving S.H.I.E.L.D.'s massive budget free for wiretaps, lady-boys or whatever the hell those rascals like to spend tax dollars on.

Likewise, removing our super-soldiers from state control leaves the President free to sign this **superhuman test ban treaty** Russia and China have been pushing for.



The ultimates took the world to **the brink**. Even an old warhorse like **Fury** can see that now.



And, naturally, you've been **preparing** for all this since the very **beginning**, right?

Well, this was one of **fourteen** probable outcomes I'd anticipated, but it was always up there in my **top three**.

Who knows? Perhaps with a little careful management we can even make a **profit** while we're saving the world.







THE TRISKELION,
S.H.I.E.L.D. HQ AND THE NEW
SUPER-VILLAIN PRISON COMPLEX:



BROOKLYN, 1942:



Yep, John Ford. It said so in the newspaper. I really wanna go see the valleys after watching that movie. Wasn't the scenery just out of this world?

You sure it wasn't Maureen O'Hara you were gawping at, Steve Rogers?

I'm sorry I don't have any dough to take you for a bite, honey. I wanted tonight to be special, but my mom was short and little Kowie was needing a new pair of boots...

Would you stop? It's our last night together for heck knows how long. We don't need cash to have a good time.



Just enjoy the fact we didn't have **Bucky Barnes** sitting in between us for a change.

We actually asked if he could tag along, but I told him I'd see him for an hour in the morning. Can you *believe* that guy? He's really *something*, huh?

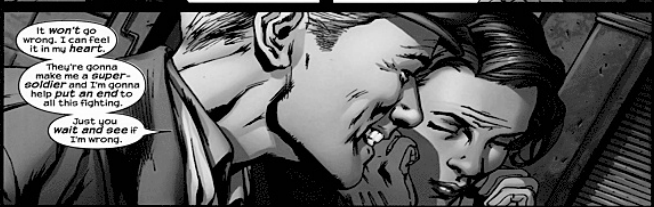


You scared about going away?

Nah, I want this more than I've ever wanted anything. I've wanted to fight the Krauts since I saw my first newsreel.



Not the war. The *experiment*. All those needles and drugs they were telling you about. Aren't you worried something could go *wrong*?



It *won't* go wrong. I can feel it in my *heart*.

They're gonna make me a *super-soldier* and I'm gonna help put an *end* to all this fighting.

Just you *wait and see* if I'm wrong.



Gail?

I'm sorry. I promised Ma I wouldn't *cry*...





*THE ULTIMATES VOLUMES ONE AND TWO
DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO STAN AND JACK*

Sakr3d

Beaten & Battered

MINUTE

SCANS BY ME



But Never Destroyed

TEENMEN

SHEPHERD